

UNCLASSIFIED

7/11/80

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HUMAN RIGHTS HIGHLIGHTS

ARGENTINA: PEN PRISONERS TO BE RELEASED

SOURCE: BA 5530

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(X) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part (X) In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

The Argentine government has announced plans to release 218 of its approximately 1600 (charged, sentenced, and uncharged) PEN prisoners (held under executive order). According to a July 8 official announcement, 16 detainees will be allowed to leave the country, 50 will be placed under a parole program, and 152 will receive unconditioned liberty as soon as administrative details are completed. Among those to be freed are nearly 20 in whom Embassy Buenos Aires has expressed special interest to Argentine authorities.

The releases, notes Embassy Buenos Aires, confirm earlier reports that the government was conducting an extensive review of PEN cases with an eye toward reducing the PEN list to about 300 by the end of 1980.

INR Comment: Aside from the bilateral ~~US-Argentin~~ US-Argentine implications of the planned releases, Argentine policymakers are undoubtedly anticipating this year's OAS General Assembly and the wisdom of creating a record of improvements that might cushion the impact of a highly critical Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC) report that the Assembly is expected to consider. The Argentines have apparently abandoned the notion of offering Buenos Aires as the site for the General Assembly but are reportedly seeking a pretext to keep the damaging IAHRC report off the agenda.

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